

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BRUSSE 17116 252114Z
ACTION EUR-12

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BRUSSELS 17116

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MPOL, NATO, BE
SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR U.S. SUPPORT FOR BELGIAN IMPROVED
HAWK PARTICIPATION (HELIP)

REF: LETTER FROM FOREIGN MINISTER SIMONET TO DEPARTMENT
OF STATE EARLY NOVEMBER SAME SUBJECT (NOTAL)

SUMMARY. AFTERNOON NOVEMBER 25, COLONEL LEFEBVRE
ASSISTANT CHEF DE CABINET TO MINISTER OF DEFENSE
VANDEN BOEYNANTS CALLED THE CHIEF OF THE ODC TO A MEETING
TO REQUEST AN EXPRESSION OF U.S. ASSISTANCE FOR THE
DEFENSE MINISTER TO USE IN THE CURRENT DEBATE ONGOING
IN THE CABINET CONCERNING BELGIAN PARTICIPATION IN
HELIP. A RAPID RESPONSE TO THIS REQUEST WAS REQUESTED,
PRIOR TO DECEMBER NATO MINISTERIAL MEETING IF POSSIBLE.
END SUMMARY.

1. AS FOLLOW-UP TO REF LETTER, COLONEL LEFEBVRE SAID
THAT U.S. HELP IS NEEDED IN A TIMELY FASHION (HE
MENTIONED THAT PRIOR TO THE NATO MINISTERIAL MEETING
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PAGE 02 BRUSSE 17116 252114Z

OF NOVEMBER 30 WAS THE FIRST CRITICAL DATE BUT THAT
THE ISSUE MUST BE RESOLVED PRIOR TO JANUARY 1, 1978)
TO AID THE MINISTER OF DEFENSE IN HIS EFFORT TO HAVE
BELGIUM PARTICIPATE IN THE HELIP PROGRAM FOR REASONS
REPORTED BRUSSELS 15324.

2. COLONEL LEFEBVRE OUTLINED SEVERAL POSSIBLE FORMS

THAT THE U.S. SUPPORT COULD TAKE:

A. A USG GUARANTEE OF DIRECT COMPENSATION OR OFFSET BY THE CONTRACTOR (RAYTHEON) FOR HELIP. HE IS AWARE THAT U.S. LAW PROBABLY PROHIBITS THE FIRST ACTION.

B. PRESSURE BY THE USG ON RAYTHEON TO BE MORE RESPONSIVE TO OFFSET COMPENSATION.

C. AN EXPRESSION OF INTEREST BY THE USG THAT IT WOULD ASSIST WHERE POSSIBLE IN MOVING RAYTHEON TOWARD OFFSET/COMPENSATION ON OTHER PROGRAMS NOT YET CONTRACTED BY RAYTHEON BUT WHICH HOLD POTENTIAL FOR BELGIAN PARTICIPATION. HE MENTIONED SPECIFICALLY THE HAWK PRODUCT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (PIP) AS AN EXAMPLE.

D. A MORE FORTHCOMING APPLICATION BY THE USG ON THE TWO WAY STREET. IN THE REFERENCED SIMONET LETTER, U.S. PURCHASE OF BELGIAN PRODUCED HARDWARE/ARMAMENTS (MAG 58/AMMO ETC) WAS ADDRESSED. COLONEL LEFEBVRE RECOGNIZES THAT U.S. PROCUREMENT MUST FOLLOW OUR LAWS JUST AS BELGIAN PROCUREMENT FOLLOWS SIMILAR LAWS.

E. A MORE RAPID AND FORTHCOMING RESPONSE TO REQUESTS FOR LICENSED PRODUCTION AND TDPS. THE SIMONET LETTER HAD AN ANNEX OUTLINING SIX OUTSTANDING REQUESTS:
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PAGE 03 BRUSSE 17116 252114Z

- A. RADIOS TO BE BUILT BY ACEC (ANURC-78, PRC-77, PRC-70, TAR-224)
- B. 105/155 HOWITZER BY COCKERILL (STATE 261368 PUTS THIS IN BELGIAN COURT)
- C. HAWK DIGITAL MOVING TARGET ACQUISITION RADAR
- D. ANTI-ARMOR ASSAULT WEAPONS (VIPER)
- E. TERMINAL GUIDANCE PACKAGE 155 AMMO
- F. 2.75 ROCKET LAUNCHER (IMPROVED)
- G. 105 ANTI-TANK AMMO (ACTION ON LICENSE BEING LED BY GERMANY ON BEHALF OF ALL)

3. ALTHOUGH THERE ARE REAL AND WELL KNOWN REASONS WHY RAYTHEON HAS LITTLE COMPENSATION/OFFSET ROOM TO MANEUVER IN, THE MINISTER OF DEFENSE FEELS THAT THE USG COULD SOLICIT A MORE FORTHCOMING ATTITUDE ON THE PART OF RAYTHEON. THE LIMITED DIRECT CONTACT BY THIS EMBASSY WITH RAYTHEON ON THIS ISSUE GIVES US THE IMPRESSION THAT RAYTHEON MAY BE TAKING A CAVALIER ATTITUDE TOWARD THE SERIOUS OF THE ISSUE FEELING THEIR CASE FOR LIMITED ACTION IS SUPPORTED BY THE LATENESS OF THE BELGIAN ENTRY

E.G. THEIR HANDS ARE TIED.

4. COLONEL LEFEBVRE RECOGNIZES THAT THERE ARE LIMITS TO
USG FREEDOM OF ACTION ON THESE ISSUES, BUT FEELS
THAT A STRONG POSITIVE USG EXPRESSION PASSED SOONEST
THAT STATES WILLINGNESS TO PRESS EVERY ISSUE TO THE
FULLEST THAT WOULD HELP THE ECONOMIC OFFSET COULD
BE USED BY DEFENSE MINISTER VANDEN BOEYNANTS IN WHAT
IS SHAPING UP TO BE A DIFFICULT CABINET DECISION.
VANDEN BOEYNANTS WANTS TO MAKE THE HELIP PROGRAM MOVE
FORWARD - HE FEELS WE CAN HELP HIS COURSE. CHAMBERS

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